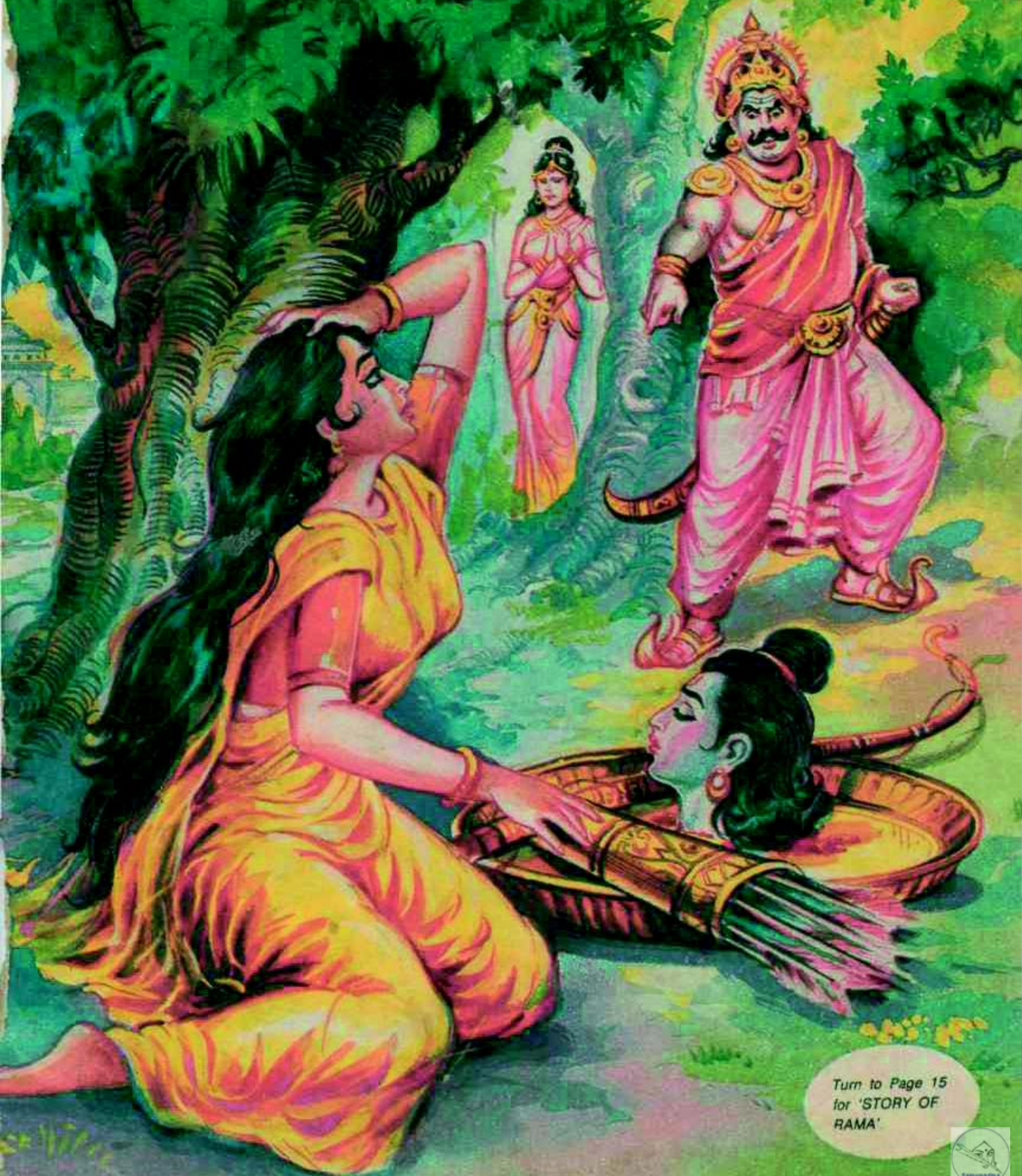


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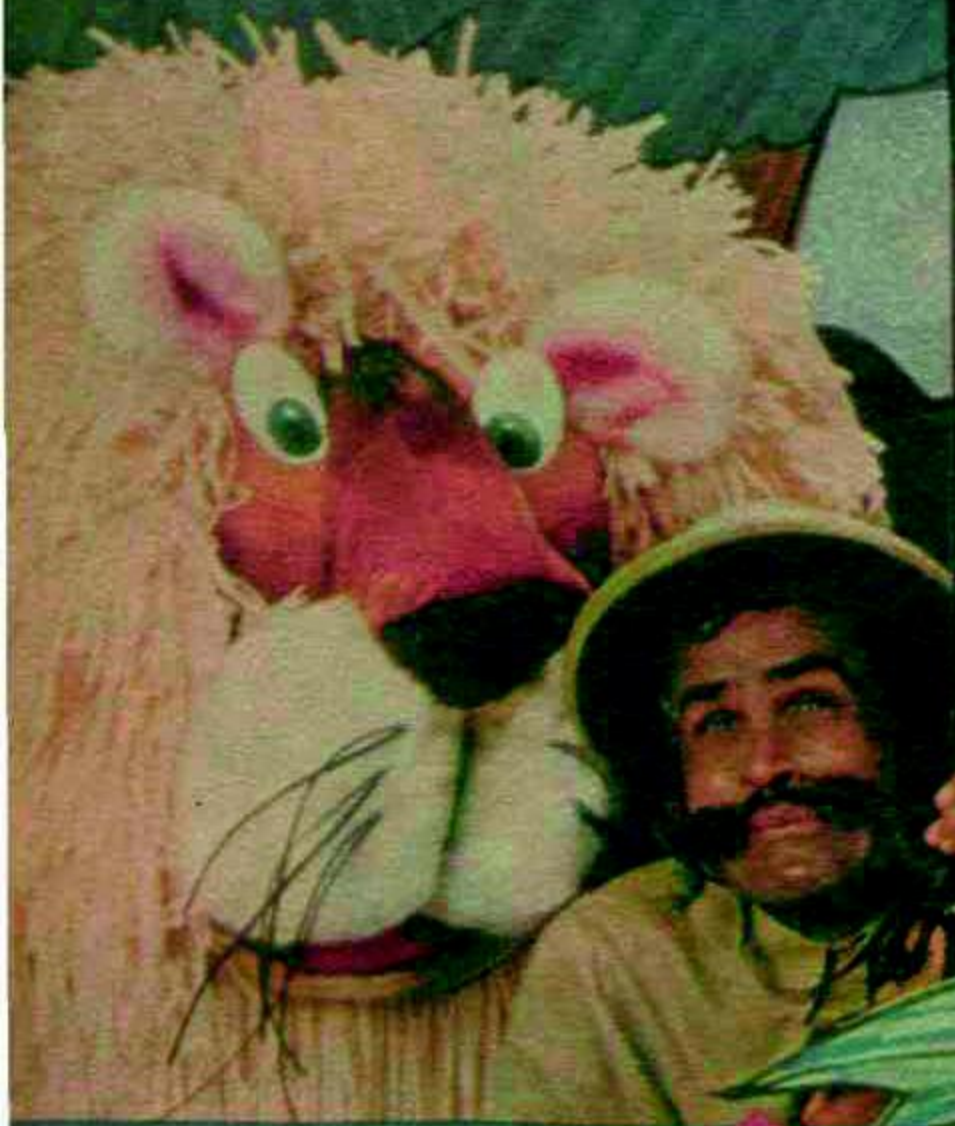
Turn to Page 15
for 'STORY OF
RAMA'



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Trouble**

"When the trouble is doubt
and it's too late to run,
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IN THIS ISSUE**Mythology:**

Seize of the Golden
Citadel—in the story of Rama ... Page 15

Stories

We Have Enough! ... Page 20
A Trial Re-Opened ... Page 24
A Son's Tribute ... Page 29
The Choice ... Page 36
A Prophecy ... Page 38
Face to Face with a Bandit ... Page 39

The Sentimental Owl and the
Wise Crow ... Page 46
Justice in the Forest ... Page 47
Lost in the Island ... Page 55

Picture Stories:

Hampi—in Monuments of India ... Page 51
Self-Discovery ... Page 13

Features.

World of Nature ... Page 34
World of Sports ... Page 35
Ashoka Sundari ... Page 59

AND News Flash, Did You Know?, Let Us Know and More!

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 18 AUGUST 1987 No. 2

- *WAR IN THE ISLAND: The Story of Rama now enters its most exciting phase.*
- *AJANTA AND ELLORA: Story through pictures of a great heritage preserved in caves.*

- *A Legend of India, a humorous anecdote through pictures, a character from the classics, a bunch of charming stories and other features.*

**GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE**

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विरला रणेषु धीराः परदुःखेनापि दुःखिता विरलाः ॥

Viralā jānanti guṇān viralāḥ kurvanti nirdhanasneham

Viralā rānesu dhīrāḥ paraduhkhenāpi duḥkhitā viralāḥ

Rare are those who appreciate the merits of others; rare are those who hold the poor in affection; rare are those who remain calm in the battle and rare are those who are distressed at the grief of others.

The Samayochita Padyamalika

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Controlling Editor
NAGI REDDI
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CHAKRAPANI

THE SQUIRREL'S ROLE

The Story of Rama we are serialising follows the original Ramayana by Valmiki. But the Ramayana has been such a popular work through the ages that it has numerous versions in different languages, apart from the famous Tamil Ramayana by Kamban and the Hindi Ramayana by Tulsidas. So many local legends and tales have been incorporated in the main story and, in the course of time, they have gained wide popularity.

One such story is that of the tiny squirrel who, after a dip in the sea, would roll on sands and then shake the sands off on the embankment Rama was building to Lanka, to add to it in its own humble way. Our author has not referred to it because it is not to be found in the *Yuddha Kanda* (the Canto describing the embankment building) of the Valmiki Ramayana. Nevertheless, such legends have great beauty in them...

Thoughts to be Treasured

Though God may be Love, God is
Truth, above all.

—Mahatma Gandhi

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For all times



NEWS FLASH



MIKI THE GREAT EXPLORER

Miki has done what no other cat in the world has been known to have done. Miki, a female pet of Junichi Suga, a Japanese police officer, was left by mistake at a place which the family visited and which was 370 km away. Miki came back home after 19 months of lone journey.

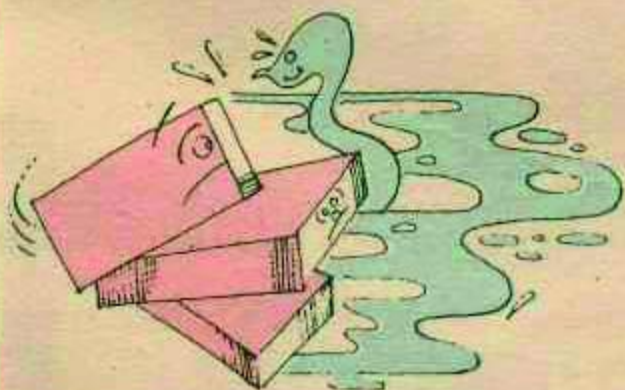
MIRACLE THROUGH A WHEEL-CHAIR

The 29-year old Andreas of West Germany was dreaming of touring India and other countries. But a road accident left him paralysed waist downward. Did he forget his dream? No. He has covered 50,000 km on his wheel-chair, passing through India and other countries.



THE BEST WEAPON TO CUT STEEL

What is it? A steel jigsaw? A diamond knife? No. It is water! A hair-thin jet of water shot at three times the speed of sound can cut steel more smoothly than any other device.



THE FLAMING SCHOOLBOY

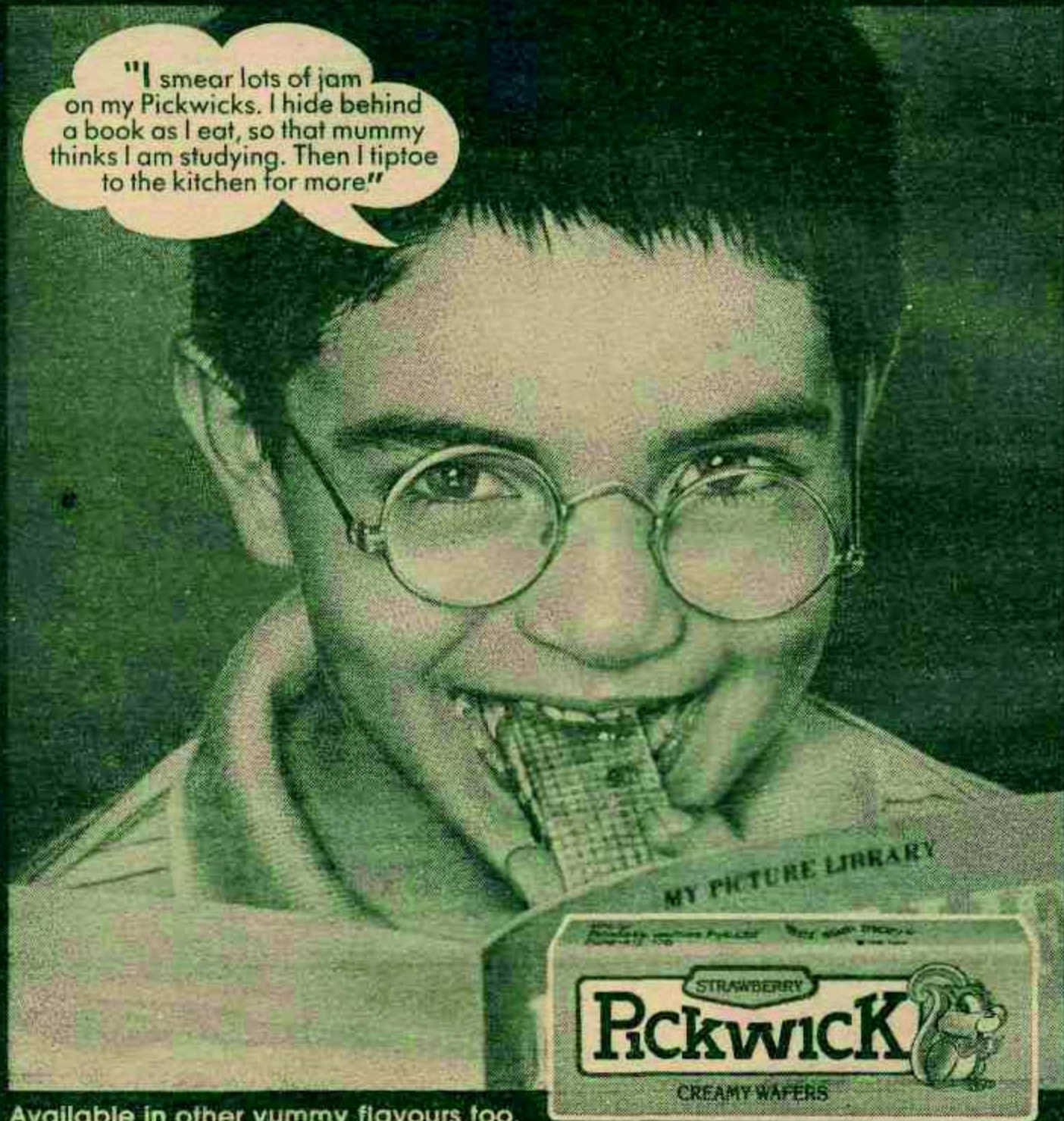
Soviet scientists and doctors are baffled over the phenomenon. A 13-year old Ukrainian schoolboy has something strange in him. Anything he touches—often bursts into flames. Clothes, books, racks—so many things are gone in smoke! He is now kept in a hospital—under observation.



How to eat a Pickwick.

The jam-smear method.

"I smear lots of jam on my Pickwicks. I hide behind a book as I eat, so that mummy thinks I am studying. Then I tiptoe to the kitchen for more."



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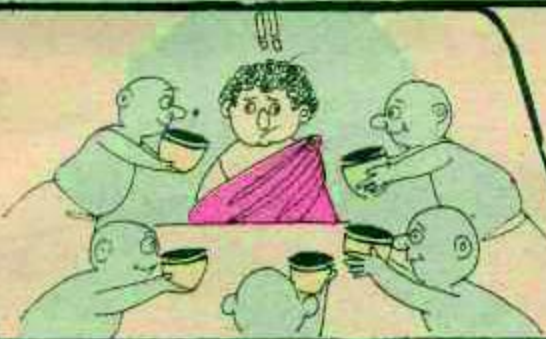


DID YOU KNOW?

The ancient Tatars ate books under the impression that the knowledge the books contain will become theirs!

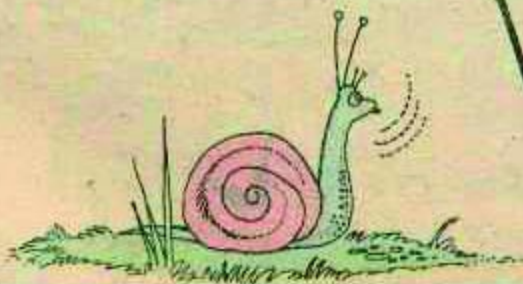


Man is the only animal that cries.



In the 4th century B.C., the Greek city-state Sparta had 25,000 citizens and 500,000 slaves.

A robin has nearly 3000 feathers.



Snails have teeth which are arranged in rows along its tongue and they work like a saw in cutting food.

The Amazon river discharges 4.2 million cubic feet of water per second in Atlantic Ocean.



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SELF-DISCOVERY

The young artist who wished to please the landlord in order to marry his daughter, drew a portrait of the landlord and his wife.



He carried the portrait to the landlord and presented it to him, expecting his appreciation.



"Who is this lady in this picture?" asked the landlord. "He is your wife, sir!" answered the artist.



Suddenly burst out the landlord, "In that case, why is she sitting with this rogue?" He smashed the picture and the artist fled.





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Party feet*

*Quiet feet
Fidgety feet*

*Growing feet
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*Free-as-air feet
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STORY OF

RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(As soon as Hanuman was back with the news of his discovery, Rama prepared to lead a martial expedition to Lanka. The God of sea told him how to build an embankment across the sea.)

SEIZE OF THE GOLDEN CITADEL

Forthwith began the work for building the embankment. The Vanaras uprooted thousands of rocks and huge trees and placed them in the waters. Nala directed the construction. The embankment was seen growing longer keeping pace with the growing inspiration of the workers. Surprising-

ly, far from disturbing the work, the waves of the sea helped to bring the rocks together.

It took four days for the giant project to be completed—for its end to touch the soil of Lanka. Instead of growing tired, the Vanaras were found to be more active during the last two days of the work, covering greater



stretches of distance than they had done during the first two days.

At last they stood on the soil of the island, delighted over their achievement in bridging the sea to Lanka. His eyes red with fury, Sugriva, the Vanara King, surveyed Ravana's castle dazzling in the mellow sunlight. He then gave out a roar that expressed a mixture of emotions—of anger at Ravana's misdemeanour, joy at his own army's successful march to the island, inspiration to fight for a right cause and the confidence of winning a victory.

His roar was echoed by

thousands of Vanaras and the thunderous sound shook the citadel of the demons.

"Go and find out the strength of the enemy/army, the weapons they propose to use against us and all about their leaders", Ravana told two of his counsellors, Shuka and Sharan.

The two crafty demons assumed the form of Vanaras and reached the seashore and began moving among the Vanaras.

They were amazed at the high spirit of the Vanaras. Each of them seemed to believe that he had been on the earth only to participate in this mission. Their



devotion to Rama was far, far superior to the allegiance the demons professed to their King, Ravana.

Great too was their number. Many Vanaras were still on the embankment, walking towards the shore, waving jubilantly at those who had already arrived.

Meanwhile Ravana was restless. Although he was still sure of defeating the enemy however powerful the latter might be, the fact that Rama had been able to set his foot on his kingdom drove him mad with surprise and anger. He decided to take it out on his helpless prisoner, Sita. He asked one of his wizards to make a false head

and a false bow which will look like Rama's head and Rama's bow.

That done, he carried them to the Asoka grove and laid them before Sita.

"You can certainly recognise these, can't you? Your dear husband's head—and the bow he so proudly wielded! The poor prince had managed to reach here, hopeful of getting you back. But even before he had a chance to spell out his fond desire, Prahasta, the commander of my army, quietly entered his camp while he was asleep and beheaded him! Lakshmana fled with the Vanaras; but all the other lieutenants of Rama



are killed!" Ravana said in the manner of reporting nothing but facts!

Sita looked at the head and the bow—illusions created by wizardry—and sat speechless.

Just then a messenger came running to the spot and told Ravana that his generals were in urgent need of consulting him and that he must hurry into the conference room.

"Now, the only sensible course left for you is to marry me," Ravana told Sita before leaving the grove. But Sita did not hear him. She had swooned away.

Sarama, the wife of Vibhishana, came out of her hiding and

nursed Sita back to her senses. "My friend, are you crazy? Don't you know the valour and power of your husband? He is already here, ready to wreak his vengeance on the arrogant Ravana. There is panic in Lanka. The demon-king, in his despair, was speaking to you like a common liar!"

Sarama's words worked like a life-saving elixir. Sita smiled through her tears.

Meanwhile Shuka and Sharana, the spies despatched by Ravana into Rama's camp, were caught red-handed by Vibhishana. He dragged them to Rama.

The two spies were certain of meeting death. They confessed



to their spying, ready to hear Rama pronounce death sentence on them.

"I hope, you have gathered the information your master needed. If not, please feel free to move about and see all you wish to see and meet all those you wish to meet. If necessary, Vibhisana himself will be your guide. But tell your master that at daybreak I propose to put to test his strength! Let him prepare to face me," said Rama.

Set free, the spies ran to Ravana and told him, "Your Majesty, the foe at our door is not only brave, but also noble beyond our dreams. We feel that it will be far wiser on your part to surrender Sita to him and to befriend him than to engage him in a battle."

Ravana had just then climbed the highest building in his fort to

have a look at the enemy camp. He was already dismayed at the grand spectacle presented by the well-arrayed soldiers of Rama and their brave generals.

"Get out!" he shouted at Shuka and Sharan. "How dare you advise me to surrender Sita to Rama? Have you started doubting my prowess? Have you forgotten the fact that even all the gods together will fail to measure up to me?"

The two well-meaning counsellors slunk away. Fuming and swearing, Ravana climbed down the roof, while deafening noises made by the zealous Vanaras rent the sky. "They think they have seized my citadel! Once my demon-soldiers rush into them, they will disperse like dry leaves in a tornado!" he said loudly.

—To continue



WE HAVE ENOUGH

Seth Bhishamlal and his wife were out on a pilgrimage. They took with them two attendants. Needless to say, they were quite wealthy.

They moved from one place of pilgrimage to another quite smoothly. Weeks passed.

One hot noon they relaxed under a tree on the bank of a river, waiting for the ferry boat. Their attention went over to an old man who sat alone near a bush, a little away from the tree. "I think, we should give him

something," said the Seth. He and his wife went near him. The Seth asked him, "Do you need anything?"

The old man looked at the couple and smiled, but he said nothing.

The Seth waited for a moment and asked again, "Will you allow us to give you some money?"

The old man smiled again. "How can I deprive you of that privilege?" he said and then he extended his palm. The Seth put



a coin on his palm and turned to go when the old man said, "Will you in your turn give me the privilege to give something to you? But I cannot give you anything costly. It can only once quench the thirst of the thirsty and once satisfy the hunger of the hungry!"

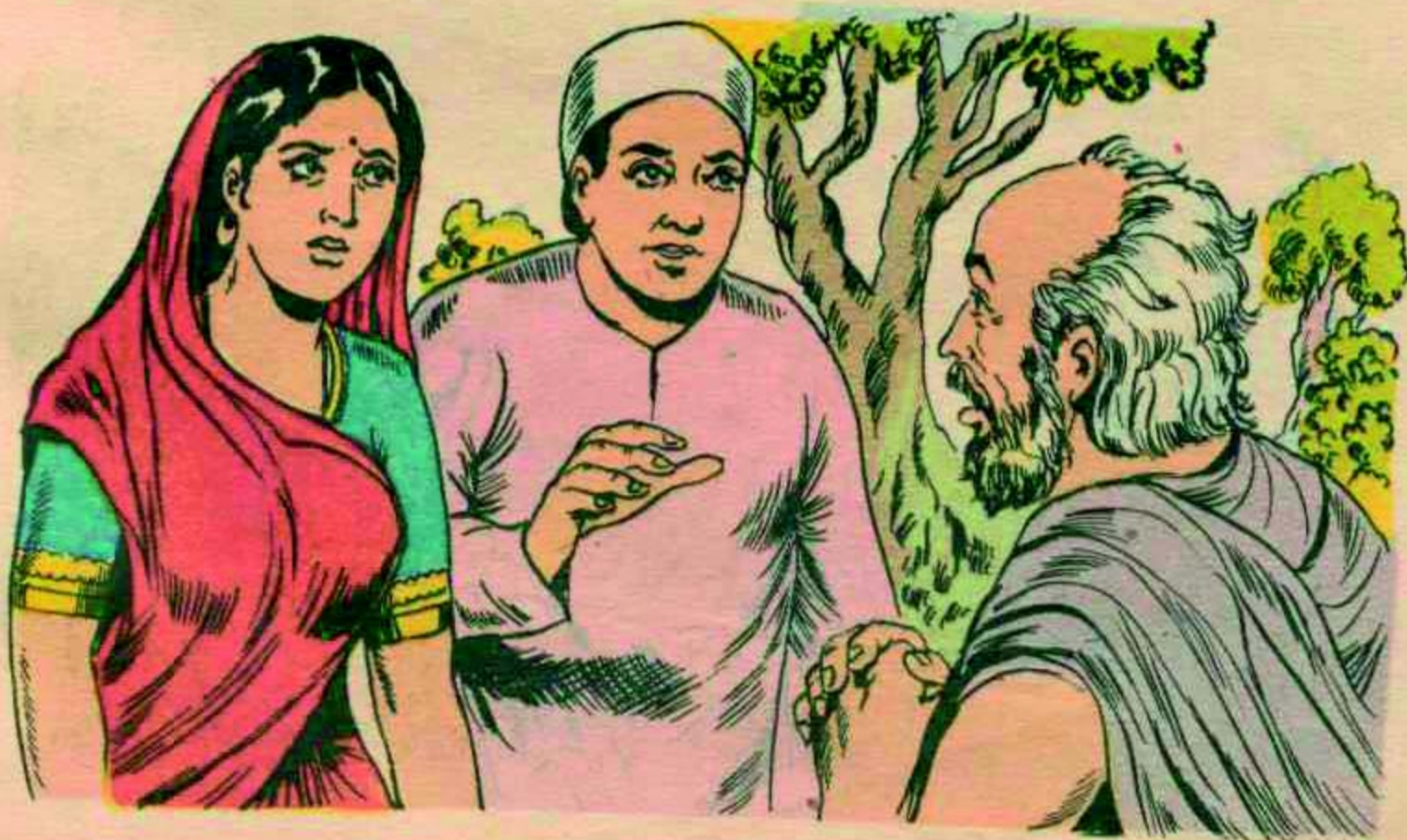
"Don't bother to give us anything, old man. We have food and water enough with us!" commented the Seth.

The couple went back to their attendants. "Sir, the boat has touched this side of the bank," said the attendants, lifting the luggage. They advanced towards the boat.

Suddenly the Seth's wife said, "Please go ahead. I will join you in a minute."

She then walked very fast towards the old man at the bush. The Seth did not like her childish interest in that old man, but he only said, "Hurry up. We should not be late."

Soon the lady was back with the party. The Seth thought of asking her what was the urgency in her running to the old man, but there was no time for it. They had to board the boat hurriedly. The other passengers were waiting for them. There were clouds in the sky and the river was in spate. They must



cross it as soon as possible.

The boat was midway the river when a storm broke out. The wind was fierce. The boat swerved like a dry leaf fallen into current.

The passengers were panicky. They moved to this side and that disregarding the boatman's command to remain where they were. Their chaotic movement suddenly upturned the boat. All of them fell into the river. Their cries rent the air.

Luckily for the Seth and his wife, they could lean on the upturned boat, clutching to its sides.

Instead of reaching the other

bank, the upturned boat went downstream, probably for a mile or two, and then touched the bank. The Seth and his wife crawled to the bank and then sat up.

They thanked their fate that they had not perished. They did not know what happened to the other passengers including their attendants.

They began walking in search of a shelter, but no locality was in sight. It was a stretch of sand as far as their eyes went.

"I'm thirsty," said the Seth. But they had walked far from the river. It was not possible to go back there in their tired



condition.

"In fact, I'm hungry too!" said the Seth. His wife too felt as exhausted and as hungry as he, but they did not know what to do.

There was a deserted thatch on the sands. They sat down in its shade. "I'm dying of exhaustion and hunger and thirst!" feebly said the Seth.

Suddenly his wife looked for something that was tied to an edge of her saree. What she brought out was a small berry.

"What is that?" asked the Seth.

"Do you remember the old man? He had said that he was giving us a privilege by accepting our coin. It occurred to me that it will not be right on our part to deny him the privilege of giving something to us. That is why I went back to him. He

gave me this berry."

"Let me taste it," said the Seth and he bit it. Instantly his hunger and thirst disappeared. He gave the remaining half of the berry to his wife. She too completely got over her hunger and thirst. What is more, both of them felt strong enough to walk.

"How foolish it had been of me to ignore the old man's offer, thinking that we had enough provisions with us!" said the Seth.

"The future is always uncertain for us the ignorant human beings. God's Grace came to us through the old man," said the lady.

Soon they reached a village. To their joy, they found their attendants there. Also, they had a relative in the village who took charge of them happily.





A TRIAL RE-OPENED

Long long ago the kingdom of Vishnupur was ruled by Rajat Varma. In a village situated far from the capital lived Pavitra, a young man. Surprisingly, he commanded great influence over the youths of the village. His father was a well-to-do landowner. Pavitra spent much of his time in the fields, looking after their cattle, and playing with the other cowherd boys.

One day as Pavitra sat under a banyan tree surrounded by his friends, he saw a man, a woman and two children crossing the field. From the man's appearance it was obvious that he was a Brahmin. But he looked sad. The woman wiped her eyes.

"Boys, go and ask the Brahmin to come here. He seems to be in distress," said Pavitra.

Three of his cowherd lieute-

nants immediately rushed to the travellers and asked them to meet their leader, Pavitra.

The Brahmin was surprised and annoyed. However, when he looked at Pavitra, his mood changed. The Brahmin had studied some astrology. He saw in the boy traits of greatness.

"Why did you summon me—an unfortunate man?" asked the Brahmin.

"I do not know whether you are unfortunate or not. But you are certainly passing through bad times. Well, we must fight against misfortune, shouldn't we? Will you please tell us what grieves you?" asked Pavitra.

The kind and gentle words moved the Brahmin to tears. He narrated the cause of his sorrow. His name was Ram Acharya. He had a very precious heirloom—a deep blue

sapphire presented to his father by the present King's father. Last year he and his wife decided to go on a pilgrimage. He pledged the sapphire with the money-lender and borrowed a sum of five hundred rupees.

Back from the pilgrimage, he received some money from those whom he served as a priest and also he sold the yield of his farming land and collected enough money to pay the money-lender his due, along with the interest.

He went and paid the money-lender. The money-lender kept the cash in his box, but said, "Acharya, the sapphire is in my wife's custody. She is miles away—at her father's house. Will you mind waiting for a week?"

"No problem," said Acharya and he went away. He called on the money-lender a week later. But the money-lender avoided meeting him. When Acharya managed to meet him on his third visit, he quietly said, "Brahmin, have you gone mad? Whoever pays money without getting the thing pledged? I am not denying the fact that you paid up my dues; you should not deny the fact that you got back



your sapphire!"

Acharya was taken aback. His friends advised him to complain to the King. He did so. The King summoned the money-lender. He came with a witness. The witness asserted that he had seen the money-lender handing over the sapphire to the Brahmin!

"Acharya is a forgetful man. He must have lost the property somewhere and then thought that he had not got it released from me!" said the money-lender posing to be very considerate. "I am willing to return him the interest he paid me over the amount he borrowed," he





added.

The King appreciated the money-lender's generosity and dismissed the case.

Acharya was shocked. "I knew that there is no rule of conscience or justice in this land. I am leaving Vishnupur with my family," he concluded.

"Acharya, Sir, you are a man of learning. Your leaving the kingdom will not change the situation in the land. We must try to see that the rule of justice returns to the kingdom," said Pavitra.

Pavitra arranged for the Brahmin's family to take shelter in the room adjacent to the

village temple. His friends looked after him.

Pavitra wrote a letter to the King which was carried to the palace by one of his smart friends. The King was surprised to read the letter which said, "Your Majesty, kindly recollect a Brahmin's complaint against a money-lender alleged to have kept his sapphire. I'm afraid, you were too busy to try the case properly. Let the case be reopened and let me be given a chance to conduct it."

The King felt curious. He sent for Pavitra and took a liking for the boy. Then were summoned Acharya and the money-lender. After they had said whatever they had to say and both of them had described the sapphire, Pavitra asked the money-lender to bring his witness. "If you can, bring two witnesses, because only one witness will not strengthen your case," he said.

The money-lender was back with two witnesses. At first Pavitra called the old witness alone to the court and asked him what he had seen. "I saw Acharya tucking the sapphire away in his waist fold," he said.

"Was there anybody else at

that time, apart from the money-lender and Acharya?" asked Pavitra.

"No."

Next came the second witness. He too said that he saw Acharya tucking the sapphire in his waist fold.

"My Lord, it seems the money-lender was so considerate that he returned two sapphires to the Brahmin for the one he had received! Two witnesses, at two different times, saw him receiving a sapphire!" observed Pavitra.

The King had by then known that the witnesses were cooking up stories.

"Speak the truth or face the consequences!" thundered the King. At once the so-called witnesses began to tremble with fear. They confessed to lying.

"Your Majesty, even if the witnesses had been found to speak sensibly, we should have enquired further. Had the money-lender's wife really been to her father's house? When did she go? Was the sapphire in her custody? We could have checked all such things.

"You are right, my boy!" said the King. The money-lender was obliged to return the sap-



phire to the Brahmin.

The King was growing more and more fascinated by Pavitra. The King's son was a dullard. The King was much worried on that account. He wanted to find an intelligent companion for him. When Acharya told the King in private that Pavitra had some rare traits of greatness in him, the King led him into the palace, to introduce him to the Queen.

The Queen gazed at the boy with wide eyes. "Were your parents ever living outside the eastern gate of the fort?" she asked.

"Yes, your Majesty. My



father shifted to a village after my birth. He bought lands there and we have lived there all these years," replied Pavitra.

"My son!" exclaimed the Queen and she fainted.

The King stood, quite mystified. When the Queen recovered, she told her story. On the eve of her giving birth to her child, she had overheard the King's mother saying, "If my daughter-in-law is blessed with a fair-skinned son, it is all right. Otherwise I will make my son marry once again."

The son that was born was found to be dark-skinned. The Queen's trusted maids were alert. They exchanged the prince for a fair-skinned boy which had just been born to a couple outside the eastern gate of the fort. She gave the couple

a lot of money too. It must have moved away to a village and settled down, buying lands with that money. Afterwards she had made anxious enquiries of them, but to no avail.

The King's joy knew no bounds. He had found his son and an able heir to the throne. "My only regret is, my son had to pass through so much hardship in his childhood!" he said.

"Father, it is because I went through such experiences that I have understood the ways of the world better!" said Pavitra.

The King embraced him. "What a fool my mother was to scare my Queen like that! And what a fool my Queen was to believe that I shall marry again if she gave birth to a dark-skinned boy! I'm dark-skinned myself!"





A SON'S TRIBUTE

In days gone by there was a poet named Shankar Vardhan in the city of Suvarnapur. Although a highly gifted poet and a wise man, he never made a show of his qualities. He never composed verses in praise of people in high position—not even of the King. He wrote when he was inspired to write.

He was a poet in the King's court. But lesser poets gained more prominence and patronage than he could gain. He, however, never complained. He was content with the salary he received.

He had two sons and two daughters. The daughters were married to two fine youngmen who were in business. The elder son was a legal assistant to the chief judge of the city. He was required to study the laws and

help the judge to come to decisions.

The younger son, Surjit, had just completed his studies, but had not undertaken any work. He remained very calm. It was generally believed that he was not as talented as his brother or brothers-in-law.

But things changed almost overnight. One day there was a dance performance before the King. The two dancers seemed equally excellent in their performance. The King had announced that he will give a reward to the best performer. But he and his courtiers were not sure who between the two was the better.

As they were talking, Surjit had to go close to a minister to deliver a message from the organiser of the programme. Sud-



denly the King turned to him and asked, "Hello, young man, you were in the audience. Who was the better of the two? Whom to give the reward?"

"My lord, pardon my audacity, but you should not honour one and leave the other unhonoured. That will be a great disappointment to the second. Since you are not sure of one's superiority over the other, you should honour both. That will amount to your honouring the art. If one is better than the other only experts can decide that. In that case you can honour her in a separate function. That will be honouring the

artiste!" said Surjit.

The King was much impressed by the young man's opinion. He honoured both the dancers.

Next day he called Surjit and talked to him on different matters for a long time. Then he offered him the position of a courtier. "Your work will be to study the characters of people, with whom we deal and tell me your impressions in private to me," he said.

Surjit accepted the offer gratefully. He spent his time keenly observing human behaviour. By and by he developed a sense of knowing the nature of a person from his gestures, conduct and words.

Members of his family were happy, but they were also a bit surprised.

One day Surjit was walking through the bazaar with a friend of his. At one place they saw two brinjal vendors, selling their fruit at different prices.

"This fellow who is selling at lesser price is a fool because the customers will immediately guess that his fruit are not as fresh as those of the other," commented the friend.

"I should not say so. The



seller knows that those who will buy will compare his fruit with the other's. Nobody will buy inferior fruit at the price at which better fruit is available. So, the only way to attract customers is to price his vegetable low. In the long run, he is likely to sell more. He is no fool," said Surjit.

Surjit's friend found his observation very convincing. That day he spoke about Surjit's capacity for studying human nature rather effusively before his sisters and brothers-in-law who happened to be present at Surjit's house.

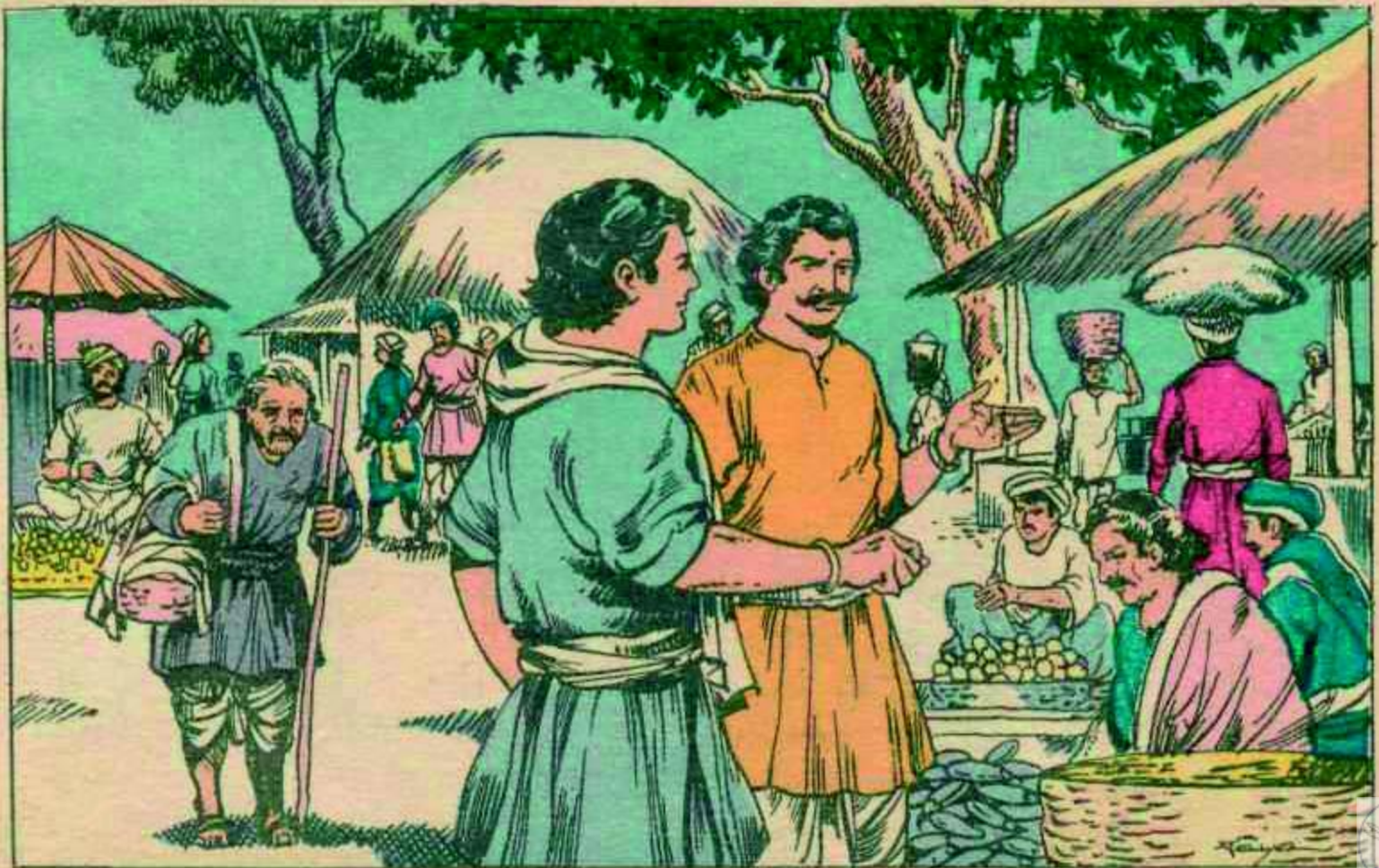
"Surjit, you study so many

people. Why don't you study us and say something about us? What do you think of your brothers-in-law?" asked his elder sister.

"Both of them are experts in shifting gems from ordinary stones," said Surjit.

"What nonsense do you speak? They are not trading in gems! One is dealing in rice and the other in clothes!" observed his sister.

"My dear sister, they married in the family of a poor scholar because they knew that the scholar's daughters were gems. They never demanded any dowry. That is why they deserve this



tribute," answered Surjit.

His sisters blushed. "You young ladies, you won't have to ask about yourselves. Surjit has anticipated your next question and answered it already. You are gems!" commented Surjit's elder brother-in-law.

"What about our elder brother?" asked the younger sister.

"He is wise and humble. It is not easy to be the judge's advisor. The credit for good judgements will go to the judge. For any wrong judgement, the people will blame his advisor," answered Surjit.

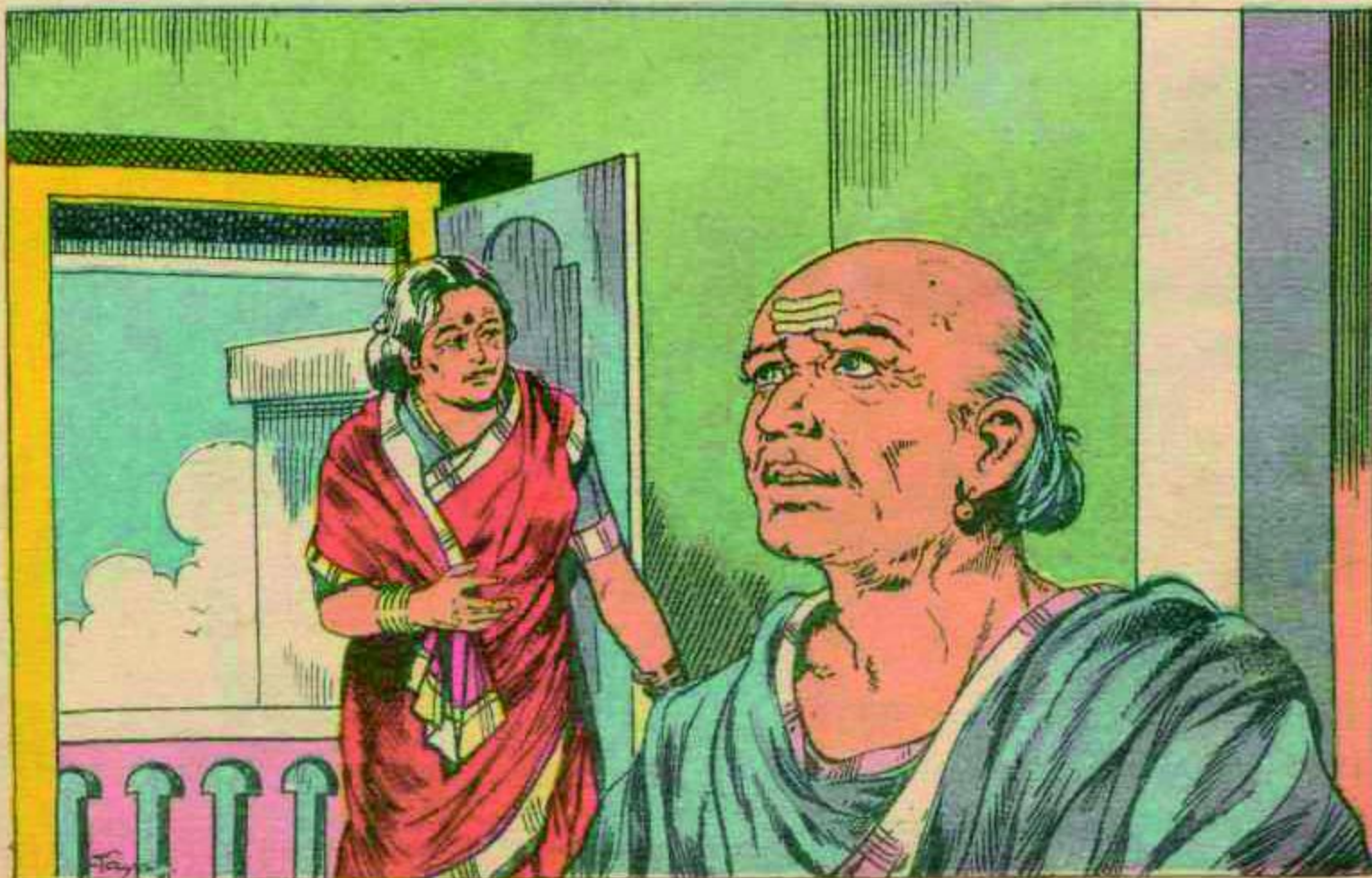
"What about our mother?"

"Our mother is our pride. She has never pestered father for earning more. Whatever she has received, with that she has maintained us in such a way that we have never felt the lack of anything. Her love has gone into our spirit!" said Surjit.

"About our father?"

"I will say nothing," said Surjit.

Poet Shankar Vardhan who was listening to his children's conversation with attention, standing at the door, went out of the room. His wife followed him. "Why did you come away so abruptly? What will they think?" she complained.





"Well, as it is, they don't think much of me? Didn't you see? Surjit has nothing to say about me. Really, what have I done for them? I have given them no comfort, no luxury. Whatever they have achieved, they have achieved by their own merit," observed Shankar Vardhan.

But he was about to re-enter the house with his wife when they heard Surjit's voice. He was saying, "Now that our father is not present here, I can

say that he has been a God for us. It is his humility, his patience and his wisdom that have made us what we are. In the court he has suffered fools without a murmur, at home he has advised us, but has never imposed his will on us. He has never used his poetic genius to please anybody. We are hardly worthy of being his children!"

It was difficult for Shankar Vardhan to check his tears. He and his wife came out to the verandah once again.

Mother : Didn't I tell you that it was not good to swim in full stomach?

Jay : But I swum on my back!

* * *



WORLD OF NATURE

THE PHENOMENON SEEN IN THE POLAR REGIONS KNOWN AS THE **NORTHERN LIGHTS** (AURORA BOREALIS) AND THE **SOUTHERN LIGHTS** (AURORA AUSTRALIS) IS CAUSED BY THE DISCHARGE OF ELECTRICALLY CHARGED PARTICLES FROM THE SUN MEETING THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD OVER THE POLES.



POLAR LIGHTS



Cool Koalas

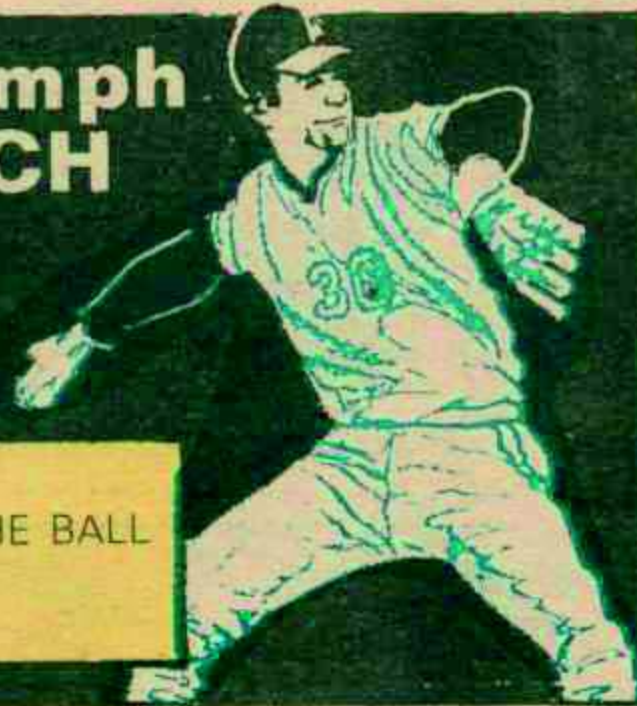
KOALA BEARS KEEP COOL IN THE AUSTRALIAN SUMMER BY SMEARING **SALIVA** OVER THEIR BODIES.

IN DESERT AREAS IT OFTEN **RAINS** BUT THE **GROUND DOES NOT GET WET**. THIS IS BECAUSE THE AIR ABOVE THE DESERT'S SURFACE IS SO HOT THAT THE RAIN DROPS **EVAPORATE** BEFORE THEY CAN TOUCH THE GROUND.



Desert Rain

100mph PITCH



A BASE BALL PLAYER CAN PITCH THE BALL AS FAST AS **100.9 MPH** (162,3 KMH)

The first motor rally



THE FIRST EVER MOTOR RALLY WAS THE HERKOMER TROPHY EVENT, FIRST STAGED IN GERMANY IN **1904**.



THE FIRST WORLD CUP

THE FIRST WORLD CUP SOCCER TOURNAMENT WAS HELD IN **1930**, IN URUGUAY. THERE WERE 13 ENTRANTS. URUGUAY WON BY DEFEATING ARGENTINA 4-2.



Princess Chandrika of Dhana-puri was to get married. Her father, King Chandrachur, wanted that she should wear an extraordinary necklace on her wedding day.

The King's goldsmith made the chain. It was beautiful. Only one work remained to be done. A diamond pendant was to be fixed to it.

"My child, you choose the diamond yourself," said the King. And he asked all the diamond merchants of Dhana-puri to show the best diamonds they had, to the Princess.

The merchants brought their wares to the palace, but the Princess did not like any of the diamonds they had.

The news reached Joshipur, a town in the neighbourhood of Dhanapuri. There were three

diamond merchants in that town, Jaygupta, Jeewandas and Mayur. They came to show their stock to the Princess.

The first one to be admitted to the presence of the Princess was Jaygupta. He poured his diamonds on a plate before the Princess and asked her to choose the one she liked. The Princess looked at them for quite sometime, but remained undecided.

"Your Majesty, these are of the highest quality!" said Jaygupta.

"But let me see what the others have," said the Princess.

Jaygupta went out and Jeewandas came in. He too spread out his diamonds and said, "These are the best ones one can find."

"I see, but I wonder which



one to choose," said the Princess.

"This one will befit you," said the merchant, showing one.

The Princess appeared annoyed. "It is for me to choose, not for you to push your ware into my hands!" she commented and called for the third merchant.

Mayur came in and said, "I have a very special diamond in my bag, but I'd like your Majesty to find it." He then emptied his bag before the Princess.

The Princess looked at the diamonds and picked up one. "Wah! You have chosen the right one!" said Mayur.

The Princess bought it.

When the three merchants were again together outside the palace, "Jaygupta and Jeewan-das asked Mayur, "Let us see your stock!" Mayur showed them his bag.

"But these are far inferior to what we have!" said both the merchants.

"Right. That is why the only one that was superior in my stock was easily picked up by the Princess. You fellows showed her such diamonds which were of the best quality and looked equally good. She was confused!" answered the lucky Mayur!

**MAKE SURE OF YOUR COPY OF ENGLISH CHANDAMAMA
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A PROPHECY

Long ago there was a King who was a tyrant. He punished people severely for small faults or even for no fault.

One day a neighbouring King paid him a visit. The host King took the royal guest round his fort. In course of the visit they entered the prison. The guest pointed at a prisoner who sat in a cell and asked the host, "My friend, this man does not look like a criminal at all! Why have you imprisoned him?"

"He is not a criminal. He is an astrologer. Upon being asked by me, he prophesied that I shall die on a day of festival. I have put him behind the bars so that if he proves wrong, my heir will hang him," said the King.

The guest said gravely, "My friend, release him immediately. I will tell you why."

The King released the astrologer and looked at his guest.

The guest whispered to him, "I'm sure, his prediction will prove true. The day you die will be observed by the people as a great day. Year after year they will celebrate it as a festive day."

The host's face grew pale, but slowly he began to realise that what his friend said was true!



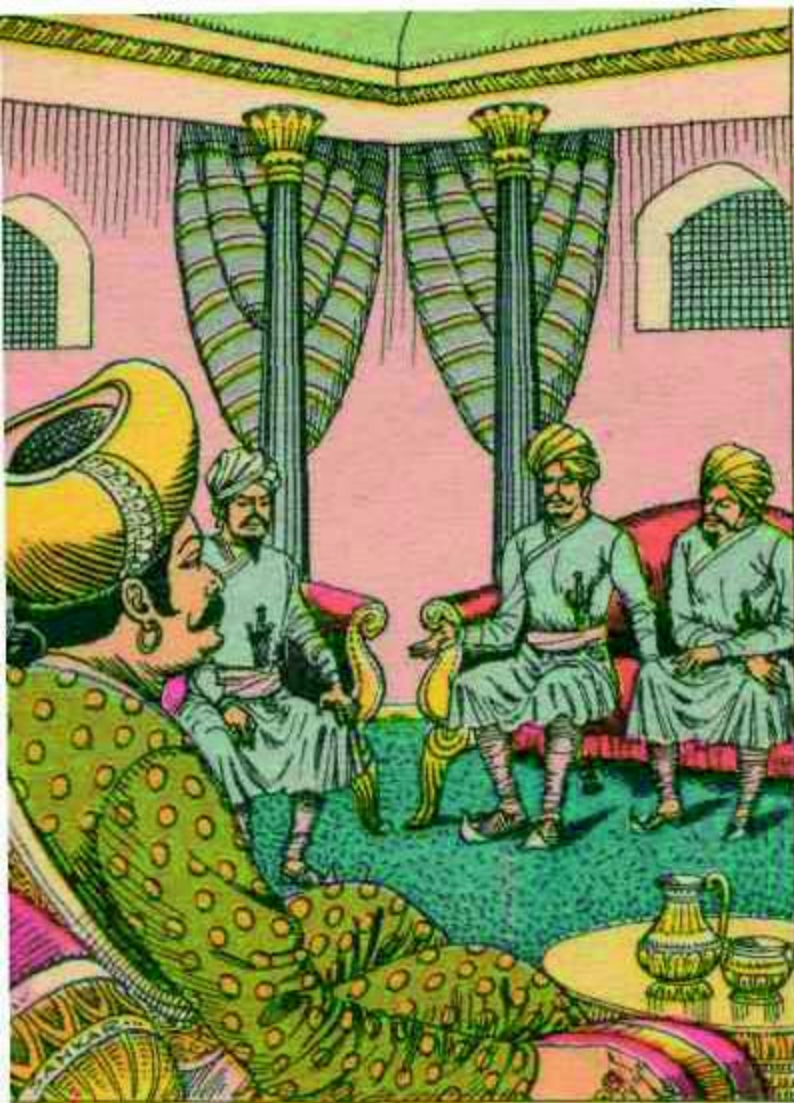
New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

FACE TO FACE WITH A BANDIT

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At the intervals of the thunderclaps and moaning or howling of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. But as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O King, whatever be your motive in undertaking this work at this unearthly hour of the night, it has to be something extraordinary. But are you sure that you will take the right step at the right moment to achieve your goal? Well, there are people who falter at the crucial





moment and lose the game. Let me give you an instance. Pay attention to my narration. That might bring you some relief.”

The vampire went on: King Jayaditya ruled over the kingdom of Swathi. His son, Prince Abhayaditya, studied in a Gurukul in the the holy city of Varanasi. He continued to live in the Gurukul even after he completed the course of studies. That was because he was a lover of learning and to live amidst scholars, discussing philosophy with them, was his great pleasure.

Of course, the King’s officials met him regularly with messages

from the King. Merchants who came to Varanasi from Swathi for purposes of trade also called on him. So did the pilgrims. All of them generally mentioned to him about a problem the kingdom of Swathi was facing: A bandit named Gajadhar created panic throughout the kingdom. While the merchants spoke against the bandit with great anguish, the ordinary pilgrims merely referred to him in the course of reporting the events of the kingdom. They did not seem to have any complaint against him!

One day special couriers from Swathi met the prince with the sad message that his father, the King, had suddenly fallen seriously ill. The prince lost no time in starting for Swathi. But by the time he reached his palace, the King had breathed his last.

Prince Abhayaditya ascended the throne. After the funeral of his father, he devoted all his attention to the proper administration of the kingdom.

His ministers, his general, and all his courtiers spoke about the menace that was the bandit,

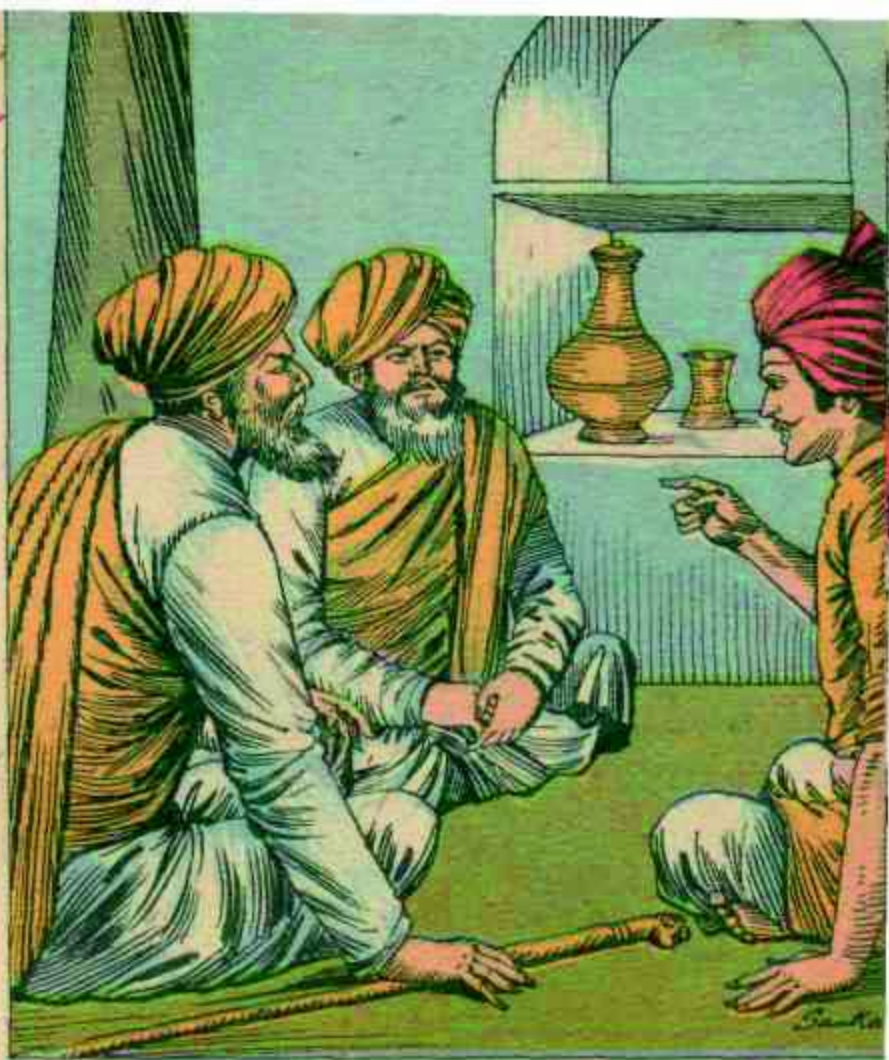
Gajadhar. The young King understood that an air of terror prevailed in the atmosphere of the kingdom because of the bandit. The late King had announced a reward of one lakh rupees for anyone who could catch the bandit, but nobody had been able to claim the reward.

The young King thought that he must change the atmosphere of fear by organising fairs and festivals. People's attention should be diverted to festive and joyful events.

He drew up a plan for a grand festival of dance, music and sports. In order to draw the people's attention to healthy values, he also decided to give a public reception to one who was the most popular person in Swathi.

At the same time he increased the amount of reward for one who would catch the bandit to two lakh rupees. This, he hoped, will enthuse the people to muster greater vigil.

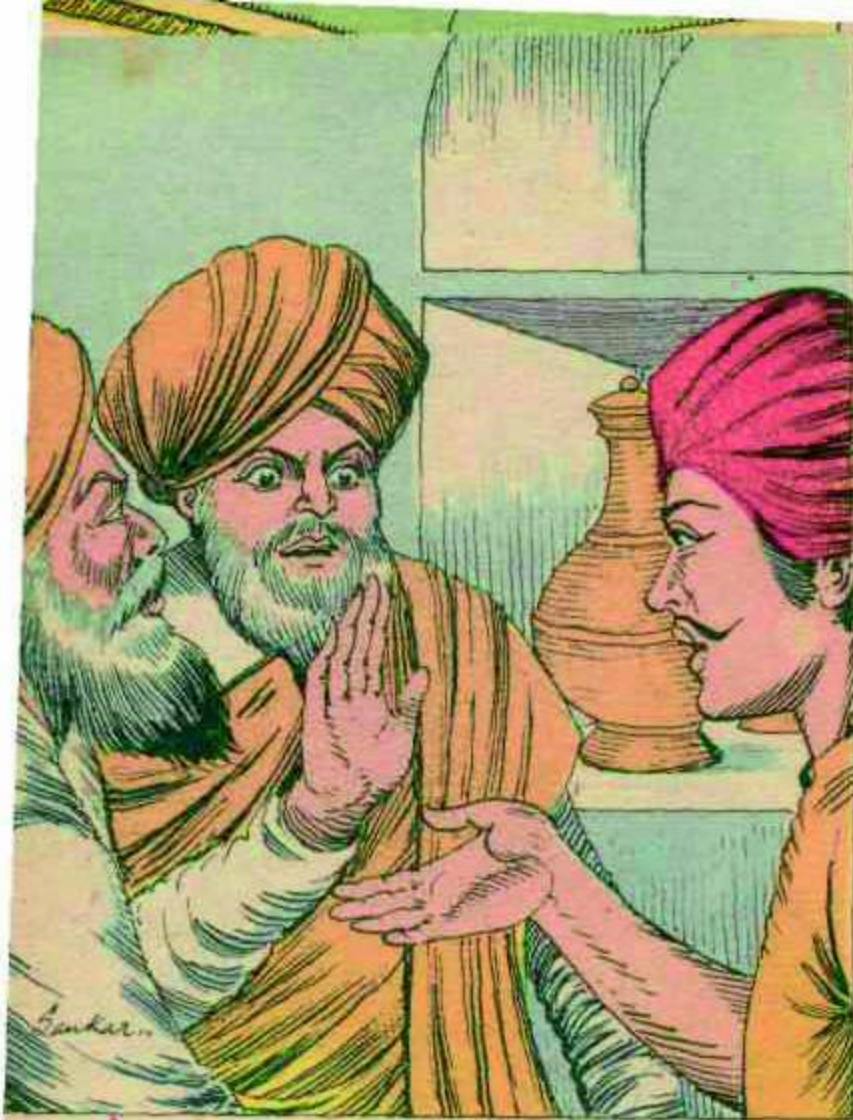
He instructed his secret service officials, the spies, to roam the distant villages and bazars and to ascertain who was the person of whom the common



people talked most affectionately.

The reports he received after a month were startling. The person to be talked about most affectionately was Gajadhar, the bandit.

Soon the young King made up his mind to find out why it was so. He called a meeting of his police officers and tried to learn from them as many facts about the bandit as possible. He found out that Gajadhar commanded a gang of intelligent and well-trained followers. Whenever the police would approach the bandit's hideout, these followers would warn him from distance



through some code noise and he would slip away.

The King also found out that Gajadhar never looted the house of any poor subject. His targets were wealthy merchants and landlords, particularly those who were known to be dishonest and cruel.

The King and Chief Minister put on disguise and went out on a mission to see the situation of the kingdom for themselves. A few strong and trusted bodyguards, also in disguise, followed them, but keeping a good distance. The bodyguards were to remain alert and close to the place wherever the King and his

Chief Minister camped, but they were never to show any sign that they had anything to do with the two.

The King and his Chief Minister introduced themselves as travellers from the neighbouring kingdom, whenever they talked to anybody. They passed through several villages, passing their nights in inns or temple rest houses.

One night they were in a roadside inn when they met a young man named Sumit. He seemed to be extremely gentle, intelligent and a fine talker. The young King befriended him. In course of their conversation, the King raised the topic of Gajadhar and said half humorously, "I understand that one who can catch Gajadhar will receive a reward of rupees two lakhs! Well, I wish I could catch him! Sumit, you are a native of Swathi. As such, you must have known much about the bandit. Can't you catch him and bag the reward?"

Sumit's face looked unusually bright. He laughed and said, "Gajadhar cannot be caught even if the King were to increase the amount of the reward

by ten times! The people won't let him be caught!"

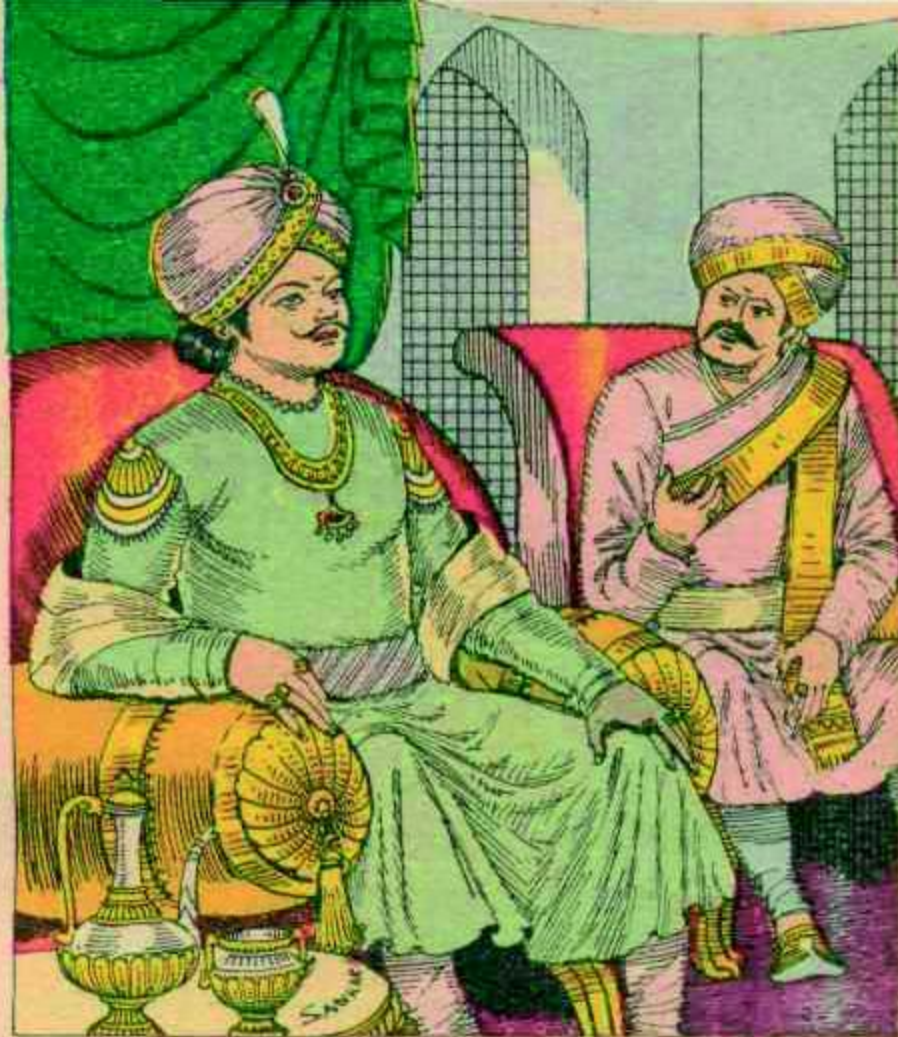
"Is that so? Strange are your people, I must say," commented the King.

"O Traveller, how much do you know about the condition of this kingdom? The late King hardly bothered to know what his irresponsible nobles and officers were doing. He did not care for the advice of his Chief Minister. The common people were oppressed by some unscrupulous officers, exploited by dishonest merchants and tortured by cruel landlords. Gajadhar pounces upon only such oppressors. He plunders their ill-gotten wealth and spends it for the poor, the sick and anyone who is facing some crisis. No wonder that the common people looked upon him as a demi-god," said Sumit with some verve in his voice.

"Is that so?" asked the King in disguise. What is your impression about the new King? Is he like his father?

"We are yet to see how he is..."

Sumit was going to say something more when his attention suddenly went away to the



cooing of a cuckoo. That was not the season for the trilling of a cuckoo. The King was about to say something about this unusual phenomenon but he stopped.

Sumit stood up suddenly and said, "I had forgotten an important appointment with a doctor. I must hurry up!" He saluted the travellers and disappeared in the dark.

The King and the Chief Minister returned to the capital in the morning on their way, the King laughed and said, "I don't think Gajadhar cannot be uprooted though his roots have gone deep!"

The minister smiled. "So, my lord, you too knew that last night we were talking to none other than Gajadhar!" said the minister.

"Indeed, he is surrounded by most alert followers. One of them must have spotted our guards and grown suspicious about their movement. Hence he warned his leader through a mimicry of a cuckoo!" observed the King.

Back in the palace the King again concentrated on organising the grand festival. But he dropped the idea of giving a public reception to the most popular man in the Kingdom. The festival was a grand success. Thousands of people witnessed thrilling sports and interesting plays and listened to all the gifted musicians of Swathi. During the festival the King's new policy was also declared. According to that any unjust or corrupt official was to be severely punished; any unscrupulous merchant was to be imprisoned; any landlord who tortured any of his tenants was to forfeit his property.

What is important, the King followed his new policy both in

spirit and letter. Within two years the phase of the kingdom changed. There were arrangements for meeting the needs of the sick and the poor, people were encouraged to send their children to schools, artists and poets were inspired to carry with their creative activities. By the third year, people had not only stopped thinking of Gajadhar, but he was almost forgotten. Nothing was heard of him there after. Soon the officials of the secret services reported to the King that he was the most popular person in the kingdom.

The vampire paused for a while and then raising his voice to a new height he demanded to King Vikram, "O King I want you to solve a problem which arises from this story. The young King of Swathi and his wise minister had come face to face with the notorious bandit. Had they given a signal their bodyguards who were waiting somewhere outside would have come rushing to the spot. The bandit could have been captured easily. Is it not puzzling that instead of capturing the fellow the King and his minister let him slip away. How to justify



their conduct. Don't you think that they were cowards? Answer me O King if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

King Vikram answered forthwith: "The young King realised that what the bandit was doing should have been done by his administration. The bandit was helping the poor and the needy—something which the King ought to have done. He was keeping a check on the unscrupulous and dishonest officials, merchants and landlords by terrorising—something which the King should have done through his authority. No doubt, Gajadhar was doing the state's work in a wrong way, but he had grown immensely popular. It's true that the King could

have captured him, but what next? He could not have given him a public reception as the most popular person! That would have glorified his banditry. On the other hand the King could not have hanged him without running the risk of a popular revolt. The wise King steered clear of both these courses. He reorganised his administration in such a way that the people would not need Gajadhar's assistance any more. He began to do what an ideal King should do. In natural course Gajadhar became irrelevant to the people. It shows how wise and intelligent the King was. He solved the problem in the best possible way."

No sooner had the King concluded his answer the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



THE SENTIMENTAL OWL AND THE WISE CROW

The owl and the crow met near a temple. "Where are you going?" the crow asked the owl.

"You know, I was living in the hollow of a tree in the village Rampur. But I feel that the people of that village hated my screeching. So I am heading towards another village," replied the owl.

The crow laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" the owl asked.

"My dear owl, if the people of Rampur hated your screeching, do you hope that the people of another village will love it? The best thing is to change your screeching into a melodious music. Since you cannot do that, just as I cannot change my cawing into music, the best thing is to be where we are. At least the people of Rampur will get accustomed to it!" said the crow.



JUSTICE IN THE FOREST

No use sitting here and starving. Look at our kids. They have not eaten anything for the past three days," murmured the lady tortoise. The monsoon had failed and there was no fish, no frog, not even an edible plant.

The tortoise, who was seriously thinking of how and where to get food, asked her to suggest a way out.

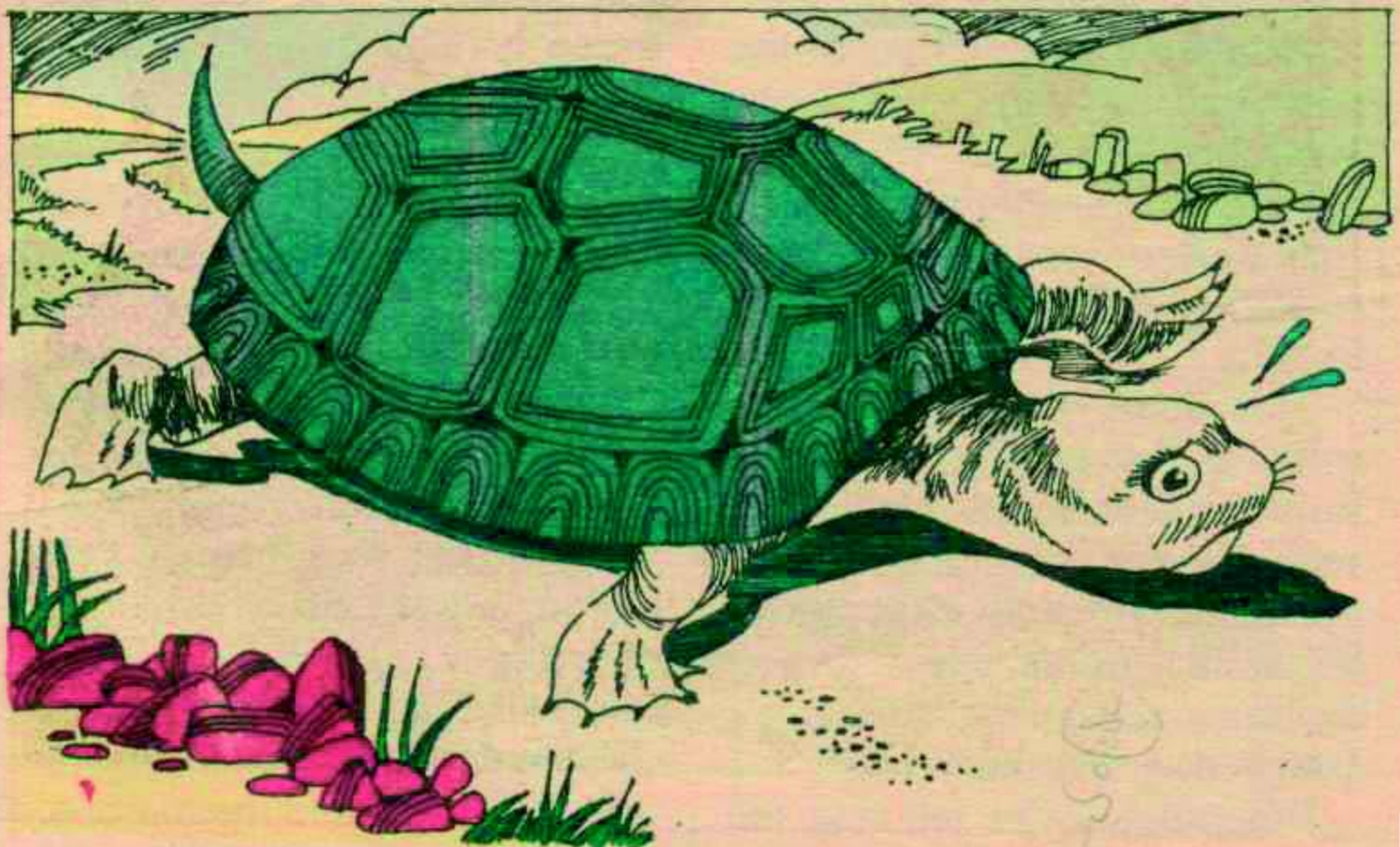
"Why don't you go to your rich elder brother and bring something? Your brother is kind-hearted," said his wife.

"You know, he lives far away. It will take me a long time to reach there," said the tortoise.

"What does that matter? We must have food, after all! Try to be back as quickly as possible," said his wife.

The tortoise started on his long journey. It took him two days to reach his destination.

His brother received him with love and gave him food and drink. Then the younger tortoise told him all about his hardship. His kind-hearted





brother at once arranged for him a big parcel of fish, frogs and green vegetables.

"But how will you carry the parcel all the way?" asked the elder brother.

"Oh, that's simple. Attach a rope to the parcel and tie its end to my neck," said the younger tortoise.

This done, the younger tortoise bade good-bye to his brother and began his homeward journey, dragging the parcel along. He walked as fast as he could, for he never forgot, despite a full stomach, that his family was starving.

But suddenly he felt that the

parcel would not move. The tortoise wondered what the reason could be. He turned round to see if the parcel had got stuck in a bush. But to his great dismay he saw a huge lizard sitting on the parcel and giggling.

"Get off my parcel! I have a long way to go," said the tortoise.

"Go ahead. Who is stopping you?" said the big lizard as it laughed.

"I am not strong enough to drag the parcel with you sitting on top of it. Get down, please," pleaded the tortoise.

"What! Is this your parcel? It was lying on the road and I found it. You have no right to it!" said the big lizard.

The helpless tortoise wept and told the lizard about his starving family. Then he again begged him to get down from the parcel and let him proceed.

But his tears failed to move the stone-hearted lizard. So they went to the law court of the forest. There were two old owls as judges and one jackal as the executioner. The big lizard spoke first and then the tortoise.

"Anything that is found on the road belongs to the one who

finds it first," said one judge in his wisdom.

"If the parcel is yours why did you not carry it in your hands?" asked the other judge.

"My arms and legs are too short for that purpose," said the tortoise.

"If that is the case, both of you have the right to the parcel. Share it equally." This was the judgement.

The executioner cut the parcel into two and gave half to each.

The big lizard, his joy knowing no bounds, ran away with his booty. But the tortoise was disappointed. However, he reached home dragging along his share and told the story to his wife.

"Well, well, let us eat and relax. We can teach the lizard the lesson of his life," she said.

A few weeks passed.

The tortoise and his wife were on their way to see the elder tortoise. Under a tree they saw the big lizard sleeping. He had taken a sumptuous dinner of flying ants and his belly was full.

The tortoise recognised the lizard and showed him to his wife.

His wife whispered a plan into



his ear.

They walked up to the snoring lizard, tiptoe. The tortoise came upon the lizard from behind and his wife from the front and both pressed their hands on the lizard's back.

"It's mine. I found him first," shouted the lady tortoise.

"No, no, he is mine. He is my find," retorted her husband, wincing at his wife.

The big lizard woke up with a start. He was in the clutches of the two tortoises. He struggled to breathe.

The tug of war between the husband and the wife continued for a few minutes and then both

agreed to lead the find to the court and settle the matter there.

Dragging the gasping lizard, the two tortoises went to the same court and put the case before the two old judges and the executioner.

"Anything that is found on the road belongs to the one who picks it up first," said one of the judges.

"We found it together," said the tortoise couple.

The big lizard shook with fear. He wanted to speak but the lady tortoise held his mouth tightly shut with her hands.

"Since both of you have found it together, share it equally," was the judgement.

The lizard began crying. He saw the executioner raise his

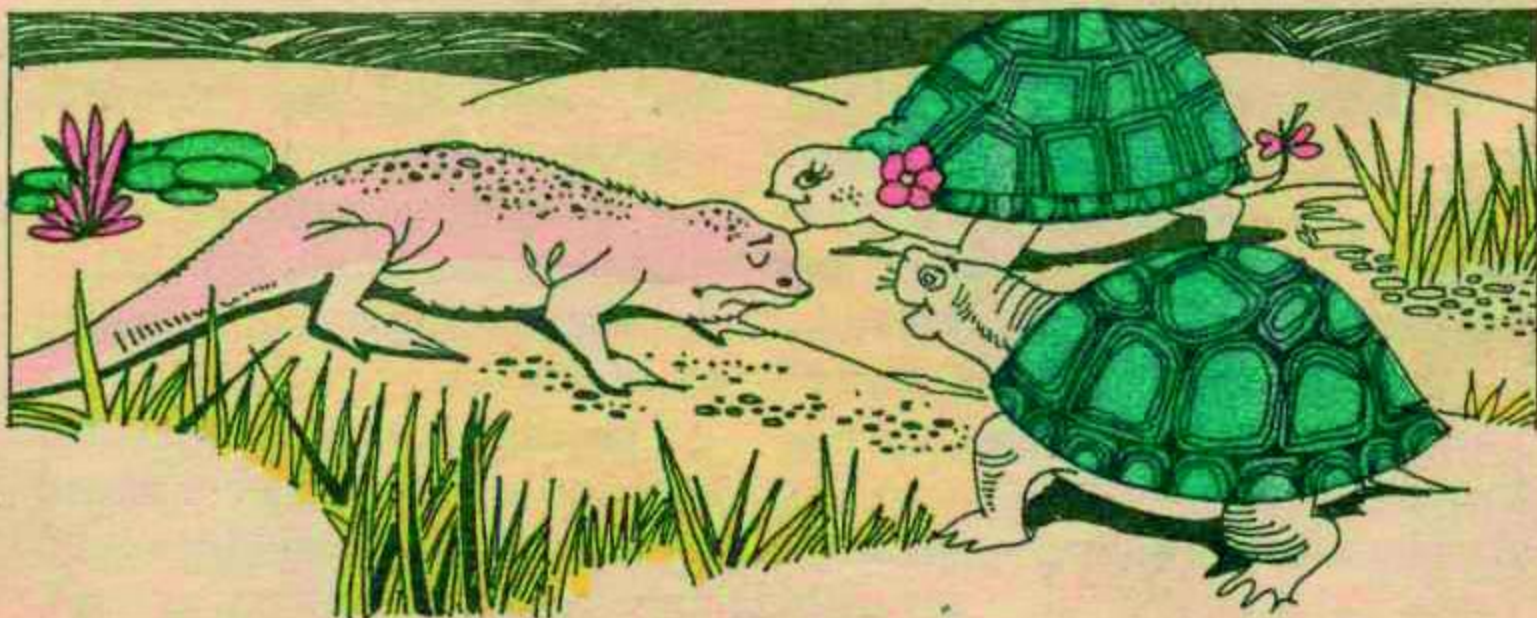
axe. He knew his end had come. He closed his eyes. The axe was inches away when the lady tortoise signalled the executioner to stop and released the lizard from her grasp. Everyone was astonished. The judges and the executioner looked at her.

"Had I not stopped the executioner, the lizard would have been dead by now. But two wrongs don't make one right," said the lady tortoise. After a pause she added, "Therefore, we have decided to pardon the lizard."

The lizard could find no words to thank them but promised not to harass anyone in future, a promise which he kept.

The judges and the executioner looked on admiringly as the tortoise and his wife resumed their journey.

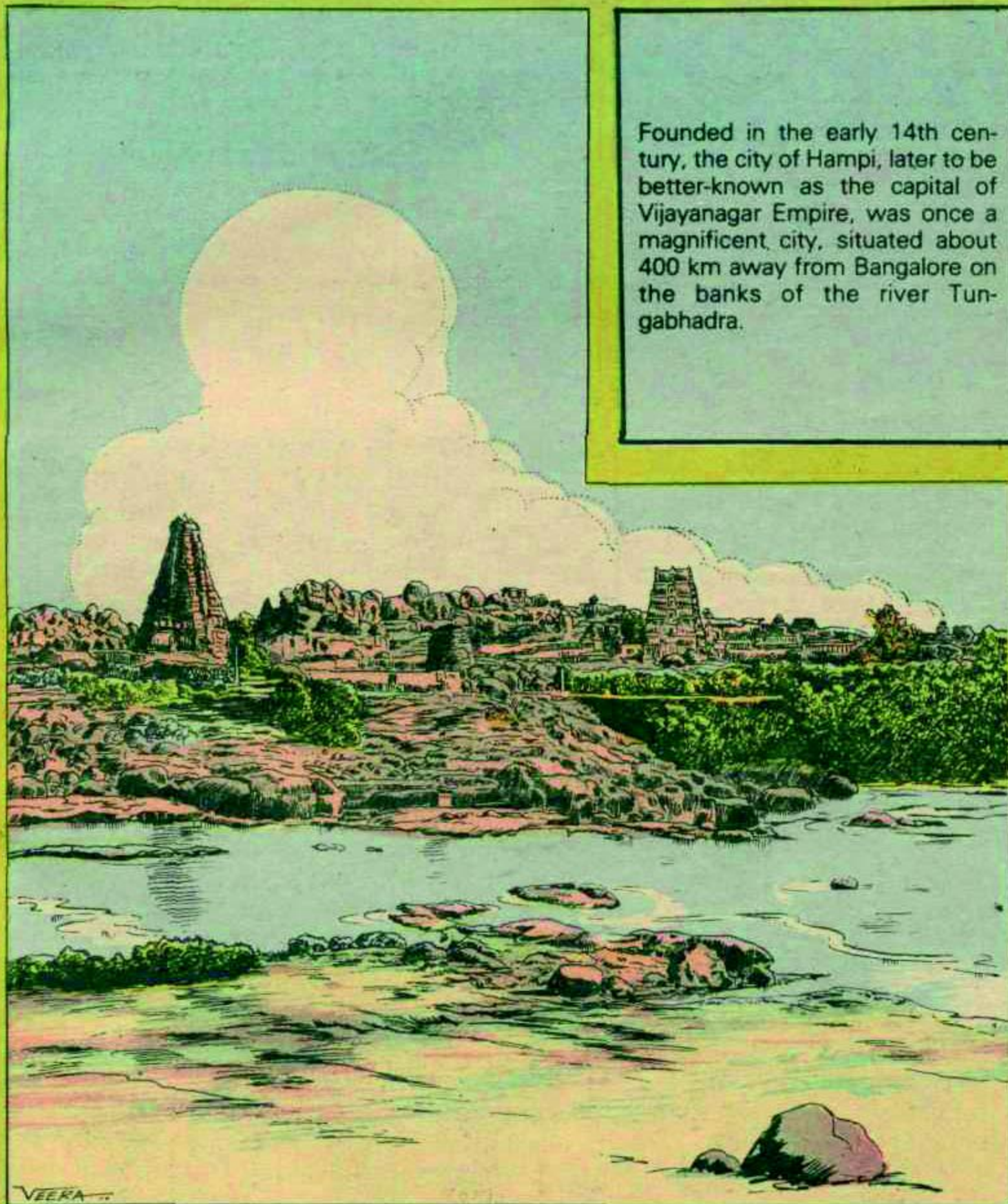
—Retold by P. Raja



HAMPI

RUINS OF A GREAT EMPIRE

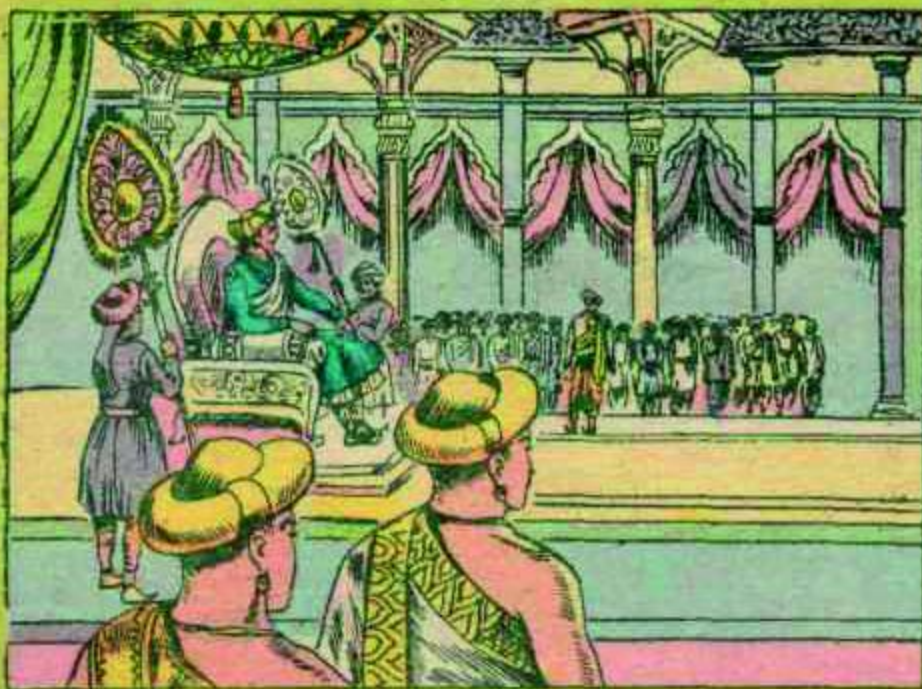
Founded in the early 14th century, the city of Hampi, later to be better-known as the capital of Vijayanagar Empire, was once a magnificent city, situated about 400 km away from Bangalore on the banks of the river Tungabhadra.





According to a legend, a young man named Harihara once met the famous sage Vidyaranya and told him how he saw in a forest two hares chasing a hound—a very unusual thing to happen. The sage said that the forest was the fit place for a capital.

The sage prayed to Goddess Bhubaneswari to provide Harihara and his brother, Bukka, with wealth enough to build a town. His prayers were answered by a shower of gold at night.



Harihara became the ruler. His brother Bukka succeeded him. They had for their ministers, the great grammarian Sayana and his brother Madhavacharya, who as an ascetic, was known as Vidyaranya.

Of all the Kings of Vijayanagar belonging to four dynasties, the most famous was Krishnadeva Raya, who ruled from 1509 to 1529. He was not only a great ruler, but also a great builder of temples and monuments.



King Krishnadeva Raya routed the armies of the sultans of Bijapur and Bidar who harassed his predecessors again and again. Free from these pestering enemies, he consolidated his empire.

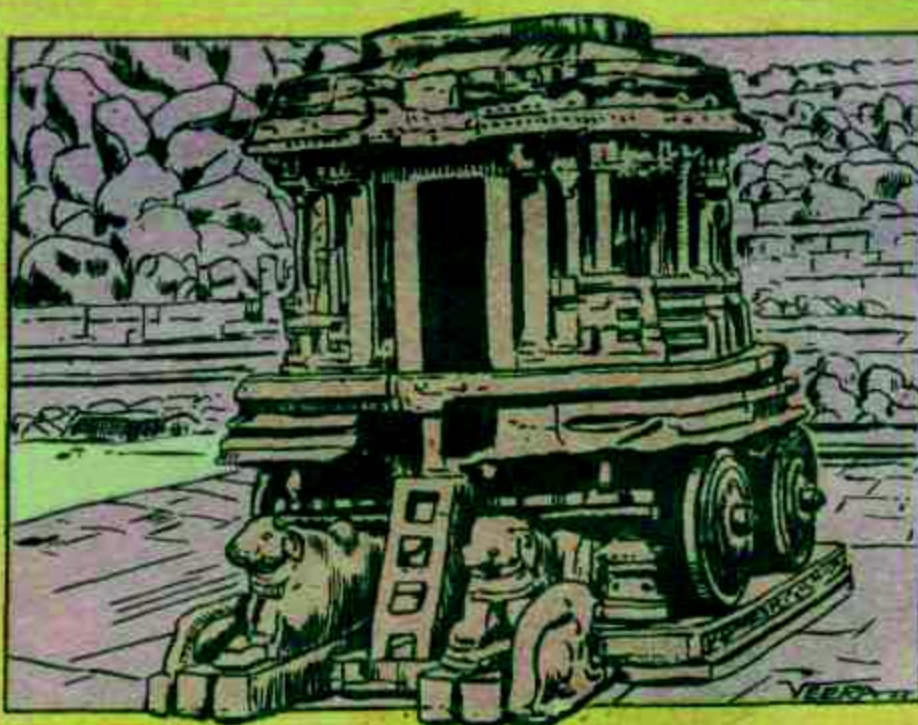
However, the prosperous city of Hampi was destroyed in 1565, after the battle of Talikota, by a combined army of Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar and Bidar. The invaders thoroughly plundered and destroyed all monuments.





The largest of the shrines is Pattabhirama temple, with a great hall in front of it. It was built by Achutha Raya (1530-42). This is situated at the centre of the impressive ruins.

This stone chariot of Vithala temple complex is a superb specimen of the dynamism the stone carvings could imbibe. In the temple is worshipped the child Krishna.



This image of Lakshminarasimha is at once forceful and magnificent. Even today Hampi abounds in sculptural and architectural marvels, spread over a large area.

LOST IN THE ISLAND

In the village of Ranipur lived two brothers Ramlal and Harinath. They were very close to each other. Their parents were no more. Ramlal who was older looked after his younger brother well.

But this happy state of affairs did not last long! Ramlal got married. His wife Geeta was unfortunately a very greedy woman and also a shrew. Geeta and Harinath could not get along. Harinath decided to live separately.

Harinath got his share of the land. He went to his brother and asked him for some grain.

Ramlal still loved his brother very much and was eager to help him. He asked his wife Geeta to give him a bagful of grain.

But Geeta did not want Harinath to prosper. She gave him grain, but they were boiled ones!

Harinath took the grain in good faith and went to his field and sowed them. The grain being boiled did not sprout.





Harinath was very disappointed. But to his joy one grain which had escaped being boiled sprouted.

Harinath tended this sprout very carefully. He spent all his time near it. The sprout grew up to be as tall as a banyan tree! The ear of wheat which grew on it was so huge that it was bound to yield what the whole field would have yielded.

When the wheat was ripe, Harinath made preparations to cut down the tree. He set out with his axe.

Suddenly a huge bird descended on the tree and snapped the sheaf of corn and flew

away.

Harinath ran after the bird shouting, "Stop. Give it back to me!" But the bird did not pay heed to his entreatments. Both reached the seashore. The bird descended on the ground and spoke in a human voice, "How can this one sheaf of wheat be so valuable to you? Across this sea there is an island. It is very small. But there are lots of valuable things like gold, silver, diamonds, precious and rare gems lying about all over it. In exchange for this wheat I can carry you on my back to the island. You may pick up whatever you wish and I would bring you back."

Harinath was astonished and delighted. He sat on the mighty bird's back. The bird asked him not to be frightened and told him it would be good if he shut his eyes. Harinath then felt the wind whistling past his body like powerful currents. He could also hear the roar of the waves below.

It was dawn when the bird started descending. It settled itself on a rock. Harinath opened his eyes. Before him lay treasure galore—gold, silver, gems in abundance. The bird

told him to take what he wanted, but they must return before sunrise for the sun is so hot that a bird cannot bear it.

Harinath just picked up a few pieces of gold and returned to the bird's back. The bird then took off and left him on the seashore near his village. Harinath sold his gold and put the money in business. Suddenly he became very wealthy. Geeta was jealous. She wanted to know the secret behind his success. She asked her husband to invite him for dinner. She was so polite towards Harinath that Ramlal was astonished.

He believed she was changing

for the better. But she was only trying to find out Harinath's secret. And Harinath had nothing to hide from his brother and sister-in-law!

Geeta boiled all the wheat grain she had, except one and sowed them. Then she worked hard to protect the only sprout. Every now and then she would look towards the sky to see whether the great bird was flying past or not. The sprout grew up to be very tall. The ear of wheat was as impressive as it had been on Harinath's field. Suddenly one day the mighty bird swooped down and picked it up.



Geeta ran behind the bird, just as Harinath had done. On the seashore the bird told her the same thing it had told Harinath. Geeta, excited with the prospect of laying her hands on fabulous wealth immediately got onto the bird's back.

The bird then took Geeta to the island. As soon as Geeta saw the island, she was speechless with wonder. The huge pieces of gold, silver and gems lying there were as big as boulders.

Even the smaller ones were as big as bricks. "Don't collect too many. I cannot carry much weight!" said the bird. Geeta went running about collecting the very best ones and she went on collecting them. The bird cautioned her, saying "You have collected more than you can carry. Why don't we return?

We must leave before sunrise. The sun is so fiery that my wings may catch fire!"

But Geeta was in no mood to hear the bird.

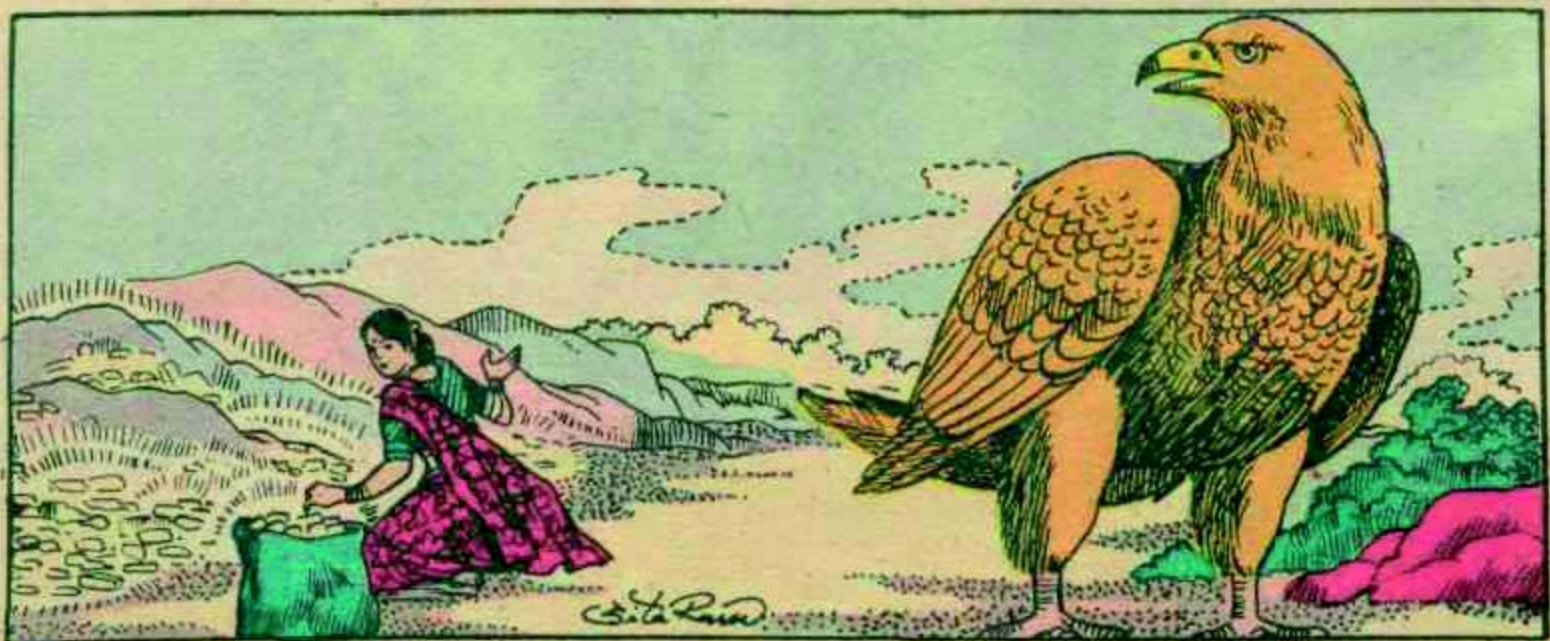
After some time the bird said urgently, "This is enough. The sun is about to come out. We must depart. If you are not going to come, I shall take off."

The sun was seen rising. The bird flew away.

As Geeta did not return, Ramlal was greatly worried.

"I'm afraid, my sister-in-law did not act according to the bird's instruction: Let us remain watchful. The bird visits the island once every year. We will request him to bring her back next year," said Harinath.

But he sounded quite uncertain. —Retold by Anuradha Rao



ASHOKA SUNDARI

GIFT OF THE MYSTERY TREE

One day Shiva and Parvati were roaming in the Nandan Kanan, the celestial garden. Shiva drew Parvati's attention to *Kalpavriksha* or the Wish-fulfilling tree. "Can you give me a sweet little girl?" Parvati asked the tree to test its power. Instantly into her arms fell a beautiful child.

As Ashoka Kumari grew up a little, a demon named Hoonda desired to take her away to marry her in the future. But he was informed that Parvati had already decided about her marriage, that she was to marry Nahusha, the grandson of Pururavas and Urvashi.

Hoonda possessed the nurse who was attending upon Nahusha. The nurse, without knowing what she was doing, carried the child out of his parents' house at midnight. Hoonda then carried the child to his house and asked his wife to kill it and cook its flesh. The demoness asked her cook to do the needful. The kind-hearted cook left the child in front of Sage Vasistha's hut and cooked animal meat for the demon.

Nahusha grew up in Vasistha's hermitage. One day, he heard a poet singing the story of his life. He was surprised. He asked Sage Vasistha and knew the story to be true. He also learnt that he was destined to marry Ashoka Sundari.

He took up arms and first went to meet Ashoka Sundari. Just then Hoonda was trying to force her to marry him, sure that Nahusha had been killed.

Nahusha challenged the demon to a fight and killed him and married Ashoka Sundari.



"BOOKS AND BOOKS"

"What does to be in someone's (say, the minister's or the principal's) good books mean?" asks K. Shanthi Priya of Kurnool.

To be *in someone's good books* means to be favourably regarded by him or her. You can also say that someone is in someone's *bad books*. That will mean that the former is unfavourably regarded by the latter.

Several phrases have been made with *book*. *Closed book* means an unknown subject or something which cannot be understood. *To take a leaf out of another's book* means to profit by his example. *To talk like a book* means to talk fluently, but may not be without a proper comprehension of the subject. *To throw a book at somebody* is to rebuke somebody at length.

To bring one to book means to make him prove his word or to call him to account. *To speak by the book* means to speak without error.



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LET US KNOW

What are the languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India?

—*Sonali Sen Gupta,
Jamshedpur.*

(1) Assamese (2) Bengali (3) Gujarati (4) Hindi (5) Kannada (6) Kashmiri (7) Malayalam (8) Marathi (9) Oriya (10) Punjabi (11) Sanskrit (12) Tamil (13) Telugu (14) Urdu and (15) Sindhi.

Who is the tallest man in the world in our time?

—*Raghav Kumar Yadav,
Mulhansi.*

The tallest man in recent times, with bona fides, was Robert Wadlow (1918-1940). He was 8 ft 11.1 inch when measured about a fortnight before his death.

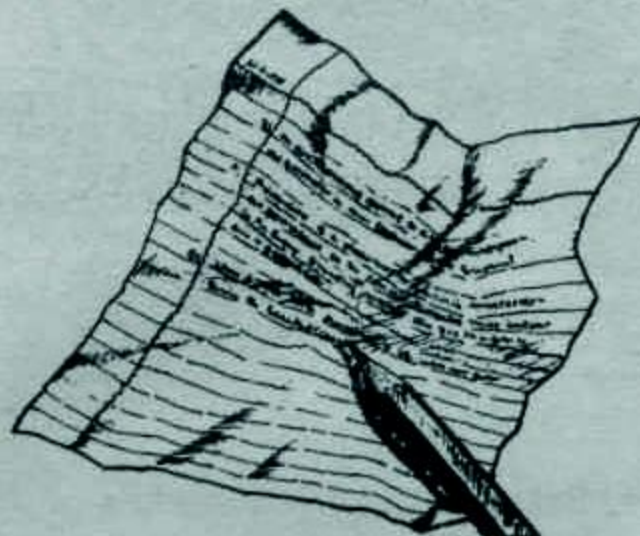
What is cold war?

—*Amol M. Gore,
Thane.*

The cold war is "a state of tension between countries in which each side adopts policies designed to strengthen itself and weaken the other, but falling short of actual or 'hot' war. The term is frequently used to describe the relationship which has existed between the western powers and the U.S.S.R. since 1947." (Florence Elliott: *A Dictionary of Politics*, Penguin Reference Books.)

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

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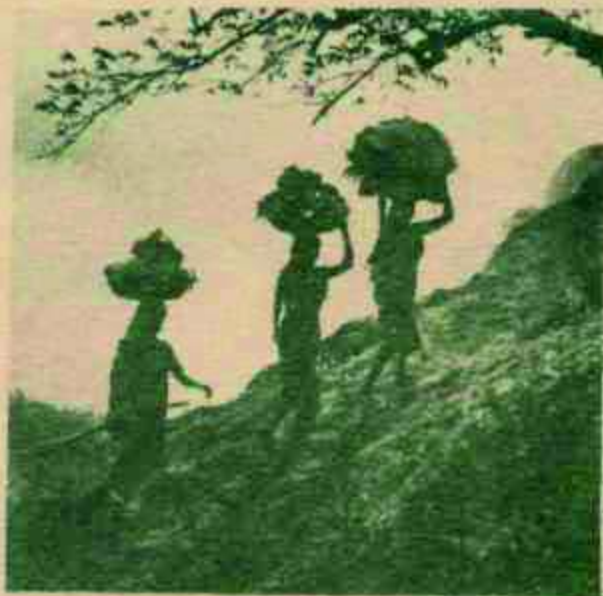
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—Thomas Hobbes.

Carpenters bend the wood at will. Wise men learn to bend themselves.

—Dhammapada.

A King is honoured only within his own bounds, a scholar is respected everywhere.

—Chanakya.



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